

LARRY Z

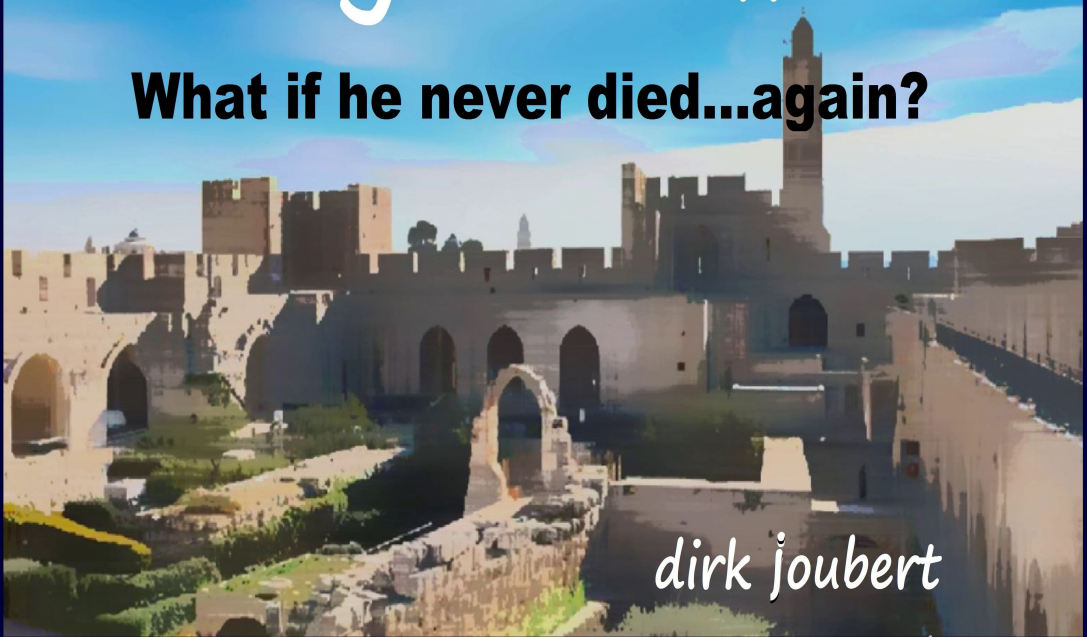
A photograph of the New York City skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers like the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building, viewed from across a body of water under a clear blue sky.

AD
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AD
2003

Larry Z the apprentice

What if he never died...again?

A photograph of the ruins of a medieval castle, showing stone walls, arches, and a tall tower, with some greenery in the foreground.

dirk joubert

LARRY Z

The Apprentice

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East London



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Prologue

Chapter 1 - Coffee and Coffins

Chapter 2 - The box at the bottom of the ocean

Chapter 3 – Thank God for the Internet

Chapter 4 – Gravity is a myth

Chapter 5 – Family

Chapter 6 – Keyboards and Coconuts

Chapter 7 – We make plans, God laughs

Chapter 8 – Meet the Steins

Chapter 9 – To catch a killer

Chapter 10 – The power of pudding

Chapter 11 – Heights and sharks

Chapter 12 – Same ocean, different box

Chapter 13 – For everything, there is a reason

Epilogue

Prologue

1988

The car stopped. He almost fell out as he struggled to open the door.

He knew what he was looking at. He did not believe what he was seeing.

It was gone.

Large sections of the building, scattered over an enormous area of this remote, practically abandoned part of the docks. That is why no-one heard or reported the explosion. He chose this isolated part of South East England for its privacy.

His surprise turned to shock, which was soon replaced by terror.

'What have I done?' he whispered to no-one, but also to the voice, the one who had warned him to stop. He hadn't listened. Now the whole world was in danger. Especially his family.

He stared for a moment longer at the site where his warehouse had stood only hours before. Only a small object remained in the centre of what used to be his workspace. The bottom of the industrial safe was left almost undisturbed in the aftermath. The rest of it was probably among the rubble strewn around the adjacent, open field.

His nausea was suddenly replaced by a thought even more terrifying than the sight in front of him.

There was more. So much more.

He rushed to the boot of his car and opened it carefully. He reached inside and took hold of the small silver case.

His first thought was gratitude. 'Thank God in Heaven I didn't close it. Thank God.' There was so much more of it.

2003

“To some, he is a conspiracy. An urban legend. I understand that most people aren't even aware of him. But I am.”

He moved closer to the small microphone as he looked out across one of the more visually gripping vistas he had ever seen. Mist was hovering around the tops of the peaks, or perhaps they were clouds. He was very high up.

The trail he was driving was becoming difficult to navigate. He sat on the back of his four-wheel drive, doing another live broadcast to his hand full of followers, on this newish invention, the internet.

He took a moment to catch his breath.

Only fourteen people were listening. The internet was slow. Live audio broadcasts were a relatively new form of communication. But still. It was 2003 for crying out loud.

Still, fourteen really weren't that many.

To Markus, it was not about the numbers. These were fourteen minds that could be opened to this truth. A very old and fantastic truth, that very few people ever learn.

“My great, great, great-grandfather knew him. Helped him several times. So did my great-grandfather, my grandfather, and then my dad met him when he was a young boy. It goes back even much further than that, but more on that in a later broadcast. When my dad was in his early twenties, he also had the opportunity to help him, and the stories he told me were incredible. I have never met him, and I was asked not to reveal details about him to others. I only touch on the periphery of the unimaginable, in this broadcast. I will never speak his name. But he is real. Listen to me. He has seen the face of God and is

responsible for a great number of significant events that have shaped the world for a very long time. And one day I will meet him too and help him. With anything he needs.”

Markus sat back, watching the sun dissolve through an orange-purple haze, the light shimmering like a magical halo around the mountain peaks in the forests of Knysna, South Africa. It was one of the most beautiful places he had seen in his travels around the world, investigating this man and the work he was doing.

He came close a few times. Just recently he met someone who knew a man who knew him personally. But he was an old man already, who passed away before Markus could meet him.

He kept travelling, following every whisper, investigating every rumour.

“Hear me listeners, as I watch the sun set on one of God's most breathtaking tapestries. I will meet him one day.”

1

Coffee and Coffins

A very long time ago...

“He's not coming!”

She looked over at her sister, who was standing at the open window, staring out at the dusty street.

“How is he?” she asked her older, anxious sister, as she hovered in the corner of the room where the stone bed stood. On it lay their brother, death almost upon him.

“He's not coming.”

She turned back to the small stone window and smiled, as she watched a swirl of dust dance along the narrow street.

“He will be here.”

Not that long ago ... 2003

England was cold. The body was frozen. Detective Inspector Derek Halston of the Staines Police Department walked briskly towards the scene and pulled his hands from his pockets, then rapidly returned them. There were no gloves thick or warm enough to withstand this icy hell.

“Could this guy not have done us all a favour and died in a pub? It's freezing outside. What was he doing out here?”

Derek Halston looked towards the frozen stream nearby, and noticed the fishing gear lying on the ground, close to the body.

“Ice fishing?”

The group of uniformed police officers was taping off the scene, and a vehicle with the forensic team parked next to a large, frozen tree.

They were waiting for the forensic pathologist before the body could be moved, and that dark-haired woman scared Derek Halston more than a little bit. She was wearing thin overalls and a blue baseball cap. No jacket. No gloves.

He was surprised she was wearing shoes.

Her shoulder-length dark brown hair swept around as she smiled warmly at everyone she strolled by. Her incredible dimples were only surpassed by her astonishing blue eyes. It was impossible to believe she was in her early forties.

He shivered as he watched her saunter over slowly, then stop every few steps to greet another police member.

She was doing it on purpose. He was sure of it. She knew he was freezing, and she was going to stretch this out for as long as she could, enjoying every second of his agony. She was going to make him pay for cancelling another dinner date last Saturday night. It wasn't his fault, but she was going to punish him anyway. She was lovely, and he was crazy about her, as terrifying as she was. He wanted to marry her, but she had been widowed some years ago and was reluctant to commit again.

He had never been married, spending much of his life as a soldier on various battlefields.

Now he was ready, and she was taking her time. Also, he was freezing.

“Doctor Farley, could you please help us with moving the body? We would like to identify the poor chap before he thaws out in the upcoming spring.”

The brunette beauty stopped talking to one of the constables taping the perimeter and glared quietly at Halston. He held his frigid smile as she walked over to the body lying near Derek Halston's feet.

She stopped in front of him and touched his face with her bare, icicle-like right hand.

It was like being hit in the face by a frozen avalanche.

She held her hand on his cheek, and he knew he dared not flinch. She wanted him to. She knew he was in agony, so she lovingly put her other hand on the other side of his face.

Her voice was soft and melodic, but somehow menacing.

“I missed you at dinner the other night, Inspector Halston. It was a special night. And I was really hungry.”

Derek felt as if his eyeballs were seconds away from freezing, but he smiled, reluctantly took his hands out of his pockets and placed them over her freezing hands. He was hoping his thick gloves would bring him relief.

“As I explained when I apologised, I mean, grovelled for your forgiveness, I had to go to London for an emergency meeting at Scotland Yard, Doctor Farley.”

She slowly removed her hands from his face and smiled. Relief.

“I know. I was also called to that meeting, but I ignored it, because I had a date.”

She looked down at the body. He was lying face down with a beer still clutched in his hand.

She called one of her assistants over as she searched through the deceased man's clothing.

She found nothing in his pockets, so they took hold of the frozen body and turned him over.

As the body rolled onto its back, Inspector Halston took a step closer to see the man's face more clearly.

He frowned and bent over, his face only centimetres from the corpse's frozen head. He frowned some more.

He stood back up quickly, and it was clear that, not only did he recognise the body, but seeing it was upsetting for the Detective Inspector.

Doctor Farley noticed his expression and put her icy hand on his arm.

“Derek, what is it?”

Chief Inspector Derek Halston could only stare at her, before uttering something very unexpected.

“I need Larry.”

Doctor Celia Farley wasn't sure she heard him correctly.

“Larry? Who is Larry?”

“I need Larry,” the Inspector whispered, as if to no-one.

“Larry. Okay. You need Larry. Do you have his number? Should we call this Larry?”

Celia looked confused when Derek turned to her, as if from a trance.

“I just did!”

“He will be here.”

Larry turned off his new phone, stopped what he was listening to, stared out of the window at the hazy New York snowfall, and then looked up at the attractive young waitress, hovering over his table. Her youthful appearance was misleading. Her brown wavy hair was held back in a rushed ponytail. Her light brown eyes were always sparkling, and Larry found them hypnotic.

It's 2003. Larry is going to receive a new mission,
and some old friends are about to come back into his life.
But the Shawnees are not who they appear to be.
The murder of Walter Shawnee sets off a series of events
that could destroy civilisation as we know it,
and Larry and friends are the only ones who
may be able to stop it from happening. But will they listen?
Larry is old. Very, very old. For two thousand years,
he has been an agent of God, completing missions,
doing tasks and looking after the families.
Along with his much, much older friend and mentor, Enzo,
Larry is tasked once more with global protection.
This mission will lead Larry down a new path.
His long, exciting life is about to become even more interesting.
With new experiences, new friends and a new mission,
Larry is about to have a brand new adventure.

OAD

Reviews

“Duuude! That was Awssoome!”

Gus (He called me. I don't know how he got my number)

“One word ... A Parable.”

Pastor Glen (Honest and Wise)

“This could be true? Is it true?”

Barney (Politician, obviously)

“Possibly, yes. Perhaps it's all true.”

Larry (Hates water. Loves Coffee)

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